

**Modoc County
Noxious Weed Working Group
Meeting Minutes-12/18/02
at the Modoc Wildlife Refuge**

Present: Mike Dolan, Bruce Davidson, Alan Uchida, Susie Philpott, James Rickert, Carri Pirosko, Alicia Winters, Sandy Higa, Mark Steffek, Terry Williams, Cliff Harvey, Kate Haas, Ann Francis

Meeting began at 9 am. Correction in minutes—Aimee Boulade's name was spelled wrong.

WMG Computer

Ann informed group that our virus software that was free previously is no longer available. She asked if anyone besides the County and Central Modoc RCD, who are already out on financial limbs for the WMG, could donate the \$50 needed to purchase Norton Antivirus and mentioned we will also need future funds for yearly updates that will be about \$15. The \$50 includes updates for a year.

Also discussed was the issue of computer use by multiple users. Discussed the need for any users to keep their documents in files with their name on them, and keeping documents on disks and cds rather than the hard drive. Any maps created warrant storage on the hard drive, especially during their creation, but word and other documents need not be stored there. Discussed the possibility of creating multiple user names and passwords to reduce chance of other people's files being manipulated accidentally or otherwise by someone else. Of special concern is protecting the work Jarvis did.

We received a free copy of ArcInfo 8 software from NRCS. We put it on the computer but don't plan on using it in the short term. ArcView 3.2 serves our needs at this time. The County is the main repository for the local data and this computer is the back-up to that computer, and the County has just got ArcView so it will likely serve us for now—and it will be more than adequate. Jarvis work would have to be modified if ArcInfo becomes our new software platform. ArcInfo 8 will be there as a tool when we need it for a specific project or for if/when we upgrade. Also, the computer will soon be hooked up to NRCS' new HP plotter that is not a super high quality printer but it can produce 24" maps. Having this option as well as bringing CDs to print from the County's high quality plotter sets us up nicely.

Weed Data Update

Kate put up the most recent map for Modoc County of all weed populations. This was generated in ArcView and is the result of her and Jarvis' work. Carri praised the map

because it has data from all the local sources, Forest Service, BLM etc. on one map. Apparently, Modoc County is a forerunner in this respect. Much praise was given to Jarvis and Kate. Kate is confident we can continue to input data using the new database structure created by Jarvis. Jarvis is still drafting a manual that will detail how to incorporate new data, and he will go through it with Kate and Ann. The group approved awarding a plaque to Jarvis as a token of our appreciation (RC&D will donate). An article detailing this successful GIS project and associated collaboration was suggested for Noxious Times and the BLM's online news (website). Mark and Mike will work on this.

Kate stressed the need to continue collecting occurrence data. The Devil's Garden is still a big hole. She talked about the problems of false weed identification. Everything on the map has been treated. Mark asked how we can use the data for the WMG's strategic planning. Kate suggested the group focus on funding for another Initial Attack Team. The County could also use another spray rig and more GPS units. Presently, the County has only 2 GPS-Explorers. Kate thinks \$300 Garmin GPS units might be adequate but she needs to verify this first. Question is whether the Garmins can dovetail with Pathfinder Office—it may be that Garmin dovetails with ArcView not Pathfinder. Carri mentioned small grants are available out of Montana (Center for Invasive Weed Control). Grant proposals are due in March.

On another note, Kate passed out a list of weed species she could use digital photos of.

Alan stressed the need to survey and document the spread of yellow star thistle, tall whitetop, diffuse, spotted and russian knapweed along 395 from Susanville to Alturas. Kate said the County is getting a contract to do this. Modoc WMG wants to coordinate with Lassen SWAT Team. This will be brought up at next Consortium meeting. Carri will be the lead on this since her work priority has become roadside weeds and specifically highway 395.

SB1740 Update and State Budget Situation

No positive breakthrough has occurred with respect to our SB 1740 funding. In fact, the State budget situation has worsened with more layoffs planned. Worst case scenario would be 14 people and 3 million dollars cut from the Integrated Weed Control and Biocontrol programs. Unfortunately, these two programs are taking the brunt of the cuts. Basically, the funding shortfalls will affect chemical treatment of A-rated weeds such as the knapweeds and thistles. The County will no longer be able to offer 50% cost-share. Landowners will have to pay 100%. Carri's job is also in jeopardy but since layoffs now are based on work needs rather than seniority, she has a good chance of being retained as her priority is high-corridor detection. She will also be the chief grant-writer for our area (Siskiyou, Lassen, and Modoc Counties). The WMG will draft a letter stressing the importance of program funding and staff, such as Carri to the appropriate politicians.

Steve requested we complete a mini-report that will be compiled into a state-wide report. It involved 6 questions which we were mostly able to answer at the meeting. A few

outstanding questions still need addressing and those responsible will send to Mark by next week.

Strategic Planning

Discussed briefly the “administrative” item in strategic plan that still needs to be defined. Group agreed we need language that basically describes our operational structure and that we are administered jointly by all members. However, in terms of planning, our goal is to eventually have a Weed Coordinator to assume tasks now done by members who already have full-time jobs. Group already unsuccessfully explored a RAC proposal, and isn’t focusing on funding for this position at this time, since our first priority needs to be to find money to make up for the basic, yearly weed treatment and detection activities lost by budget cuts. Carri asked about submitting a RAC proposal for equipment and supplies to the County. Mark thought that no more funding was available, but Terry suggested we still submit in the event a project gets cancelled. Supposedly, the WMG was awarded money for a spray rig but we still haven’t seen the money.

Tall Whitetop Workshop

In Julie’s absence, Kate reported that Mark Renz and Rob (?) have consented to present at a workshop on tall whitetop. Julie wants feedback on dates in late April rather than June since its better timing. The group offered following possible days: Wed, 4/23, Thurs, 4/24, or Thurs, 4/30. Julie, Sandy Higa and Ann Francis are also on the committee and will work with Julie to start putting together an agenda. We don’t have money to buy lunches for everyone this year but we can probably do coffee and donuts or muffins and possibly provide soft drinks.

Goat Workshop

Discussed California Browse Academy workshop advertised for September, 2003 on use of goats for reducing fuels and weed control. Workshop is only \$110 for 3 days (meals, lodging included). Question asked if anyone wanted to attend. Only 25 spaces are available. Idea of offering a scholarship to a local producer in exchange for a short presentation to our group was discussed. Ann will solicit funds from MOU signatories and local businesses for the scholarship.

Post-Jepson California Weeds

Mark showed the group Jepson requestt for herbarium specimens of introduced plants in our area. These could be weeds, not necessarily rated as noxious, and cultivated or horticultural plants in our area. Bruce, Mike and Ann were asked to review list. Alturas NRCS field office would be willing to prepare any specimens we might have to give.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th at the Modoc National Refuge

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Agenda Items for next meeting:

- Review Action/Strategic Plan
- Fair surveys (Ann)
- Post-Jepson Plants Report (Bruce, Mike, Ann)
- Workshop (Julie)
- Grant Proposal (Cliff and Mark)
- Letter to BLM regarding Weed Coordinator position (Carri, Mike)
- Native seed conference report (Julie)
- Goat School Scholarship
- Other topics as necessary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ann Francis